

Reflections upon a Letter out of the Country, to a Member of this present Parliament : Occasioned by a late Letter to a Member of the House of Commons, concerning the Bishops lately in the Tower, and now under Suspension.



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SIR,

I Am a great admirer of your Writings, and as some curious Observers come to know Pictures : so I came to know the Letter out of the Country to a Member of this present Parliament to be one of your Pieces. No Child was ever more like the Father ; and I am also confirm'd in my Opinion by the concurrent Judgment of other Readers ; and I will venture all the Reputation I have, as a Critick in Pamphlets, that it is an Original ; for you have a peculiar way of writing, especially Libels, which no Man hath, nor any good man can desire to have in such Perfection as your self.

One of your Acquaintance, who knows your hand very well, had not read two of the Fourteen Pages, before he cried out this is *Erasmus* or the Devil : And therefore Sir, when you write the next Libel, neither conceal your own, nor change your Booksellers Name ; for your venomous Style will discover you in every Period, and it is by that we now come to know who you are ; but since you appear without your *Finesse*, I shall take the liberty to pull off your upper Robes, and shew the Wolf under the Sheeps clothing ; for so I shall make it appear you are to the Six Bishops throughout your whole Letter, under the cover of Friendship and Tenderness : But Sir, tho' to kiss and betray with the same Breath, may, as times now go, pass for a venial Sin in a Politician, yet the World abhors it in a Divine.

To begin then at the first Page, There you say, you approve the design of the Letter to a Member of the House of Commons, but you do not like the method which it takes ; and you acknowledge the Bishops to be excellent Persons, for whom you have a particular Veneration, but then you say in the same Period that they wilfully expose themselves to the rigour of the Law.

This, Sir, puts me in mind of a Story of the late Earl of Shaftsbury, concerning a Clergyman of your Acquaintance, whom he called the *Butting Divine* ; and speaking of him to one, who was then a great, and now a greater Church-man ; pray, says his Lordship, have a care of him, for he never speaks well of any one of our Clergy-men, but he butts them down again. He says you are a Learned man, but — and Dr. — is a good Preacher, but — and Dr. — is a Pious man, but — Just so, Sir, you deal with

the good Bishops in your Letter : You like the design of preventing their Sufferings, but you quarrel at the Authors Method ; and they are excellent Persons for whom you have a particular Veneration, but yet they are wilful Men.

There is a more divine and genuine Principle, which you have often pretended in behalf of others, called Conscience ; and if you had any Charity or Kindness for them, you would have resolv'd their Non-compliance into that ; but you know very well, that if you could make the World believe that they are wilful, they could not believe them to be excellent and venerable Men ; for wilfulness, as Philosophers teach us, is either the Effect of weakness, as in Children ; or of Contempt and Contumacy, as in Men of proud rebellious Spirits, whom the Scriptures call Sons of *Belial* ; and if you think they are wilful in the former sense, you can neither count them Excellent nor Venerable ; and if they are so in the latter, as you hint plainly in other * Places, how can you wish some expedient were found out to keep them from suffering the rigour of the Law. Logicians tell us, that some Adjuncts destroy their Subjects ; and that Propositions signify nothing, wherein the Terms contradict one another ; but what is Noncense in strict Logick, makes a malicious Figure in Rhetorick, necessary for some Men and Causes, and therefore we find it so often in your Reply. But I cannot go on, till I first examine your Objection against the method of the Letter. The Author of it suggests some Arguments and Motives, upon the consideration of which, he hopes the Wisdom of the Parliament will find out some Expedient to restore the Bishops. He doth not presume to name the Expedient, and yet you censure this as a Preposterous way of Proceeding, and with great Candor call it a peremptory prescribing to the Parliament, though he Prescribes nothing at all. But now, Sir, had the Bishops, according to your directions, † agreed upon their own Expedient, and propos'd it to the Parliament, you might as well have called that a peremptory and insolent Prescribing to the Wisdom of the Parliament, from whom they ought to receive and not to give Proposals ; and that nothing could be more Presumptuous, than for them to offer their * Projects to the two Houses, of evading their own Laws. Thus, Sir, you see how ill will can make everlasting Objections against any methods of effecting a design which it doth not like. This

in truth is the Case with you; you do not like the design of the Letter in favour of the Bishops, therefore you pick quarrels with the Method, though *as you know very well, and no Man better*, there is nothing more common, than for Men, both from the Prefs and Pulpit, to propose things to the Consideration of the Parliament in favour of those, who lie under the pressure of severe Laws, * *without applying first unto them*. And why may they not have the common favour of other Subjects, of getting Bills of ease brought into Parliament, by the Interest of their Friends in it? You say *they obliged the whole Nation by their former Sufferings*, and then methinks they may have the common favour which other Dissenters often found, for whose ease many Morions have been made in several Parliaments without Petitioning the House.

I am confident had they Petition'd you, there would have been no need of Petitioning the Parliament; such a Condescension would have gratified your Ambition to such a degree, that you would have wrote ten times better for them, than you have done against them, and if I had been worthy to advise their Lordships, they should have made timely Application to you, and begged your advice and assistance, with a submission suitable to so great a Spirit.

The Cap and Cringe of your Metropolitan would for certain have done wonders; it could not but have melted you down into Pity, if not into Tears, in which you can be fluent upon occasion: But it seems old Age has made him as stiff as *Mordecai*; he will not Bow nor do Reverence to you; and, Sir, you know Ambition can forgive any thing sooner than that.

I come now to the business of the Declaration, which the Bishops withstood with so much Zeal and Courage; and the Letter in favour of them gives due weight to the Merits of this great Action, which you with your wonted Ingenuity and Artifice endeavour to depress. You grant it was a glorious Action, but then *we ought not to magnifie them so extremely for it because it was their Duty*. But Reverend Sir, may we not extremely magnifie Men for doing their Duty? If not, why were they so extremely magnified here and in *Holland*, at the time of doing it? and if we may? Why should we not magnifie them as much still? Doth this generous Action in which they ventured so much, lose its Merits, as some generous Liquors lose their Spirits in less than Eighteen Months time? It was indeed their Duty, because otherwise it had been their Sin: But if Men must not be as much magnified, as that Author magnifies the Bishops for doing their Duty in such difficult and dangerous Circumstances, and with the hazard of all that was dear to them in this World; than the Wisdom of the Church hath been very impertinent, in Celebrating the Sufferings of Martyrs and Confessors, and the Apostle also not a little lavish in the Praises of the Jewish Heroes, whom he magnifies extremely for doing nothing but what

was their Duty to do. Nay, Sir, according to your Rule, we are no longer to make *Encomiums* of him in the Superlative Degree, for his many and great Sufferings, because they were all the Indispensable Duty of an Apostle; but nevertheless he boasted of them, which is more than ever I heard the Bishops did of that Heroick Action, although you suggest, as if they did both to God and Man. *Those excellent Persons have too much Humility, or else, &c.* This, Sir, is nothing more or less than your old way of *Butting* with new Particles. They are excellent Persons, and have much Humility; But they boast too much of one good Action, This, Sir, must be your meaning, or else you are very impertinent in sending of them to our Saviours Lesson of Humility, which all the World knows they have learned much better than your self.

You go on in the same Figure, *confessing they behaved themselves gallantly in that Undertaking; and that it must be owned, there never was an Action, by which a whole Nation was more obliged, than by that of the Bishops*. Now, Sir, if this be not your way of *battering*, then why should we not magnifie them extremely for it? and the Representatives of the Nation requite them for it too? Can any thing better become them, than to take into their Consideration the National Obligation of such a meritorious Action, and return it upon the worthy Patriots, by saving them who saved the Nation from ruin, in offering themselves, as it might have proved, a Sacrifice to Arbitrary Power? Had *Curtius* reviv'd, after he stop'd the Plague, surely the *Roman Senate* had done much more for him, than relax a Law in his Favour, the Merit of so brave an Action would have descended with great advantage upon his Family: But lest our Senators should do a mere Negative kindness for our celebrated Benefactors, in not suffering them to perish, you *But* down all the Merit of that great Action, which before you had set up. It was a *Generous* piece of Piety, and the whole Kingdom was obliged by it; but yet we should be too partial to them, and unjust to others, should we suffer them to engross all the Praise of that great and glorious Scene. But great and glorious Sir, who desires they should have all the praise? Hath a General all the Praise of the Victory, because he hath the chief share in the Triumph? Or do the Friends of our Heroic Bishops, think that all the Praise of that eminent Action is due to them, because such a mighty share of it is? They ascribe no more Praise to them, than is strictly due to the Principals in all great Achievements; nor is this any prejudice to their Seconds, who have their respective Parts in it.

You make indeed a very Pompous recital of the *Nobility, Gentry, Lawyers, and inferior Clergy, who assisted and seconded them*; these you also call their Partners: But I dare boldly say, none of them, nor all of them together, will pretend to an equal share of Honour with

with them in that Undertaking, (for they were alone in the Petition, and hazard of Petitioning) and yet they are willing that all their Seconds and Partners, should share as deep in the Reward as themselves, who were the Principals, and be *Partners* with them in that. For the inferior degrees of Merit in that signal Victory over Arbitrary Power are so great, that the Seconds and Assistants may without presumption pretend to all the favour of all our Legislators, which the Letter pleaded for in behalf of the Bishops; and we heartily wish, that all their Adherents in that Action, whether Lords or Commons, or Inferior Clergymen, that are in the same state of Sufferings, may have relief as well as they.

Some of those of the Inferiour Clergy; who you say, were as forward as the Bishops, are now in the same Condition with them; and had not one of them, who is a Person as tall in merit, as any of his Brethren, opposed the reading of the Declaration with more than ordinary Zeal, Courage, and Reason; it had likely been read in some of the most considerable Churches in London, by Men whose obsequious Examples, would have had a great Influence over the whole Nation.

And now, Sir, divide the praise and thanks of that great Action, into as many parts as you please, only let the Bishops have their due share; which you are loth to give them. For in diminution of their Courage, you tell us, *that it had been of no use, had they not been seconded so bravely*. But, Sir, had it been the less Heroical, or the Undertaking less brave for that? It is Recorded in our Histories, to the immortal Honour of *Thomas Merckes* Bishop of *Carlisle*, that he stood up alone both against King and Parliament in defence of his *Deposed* Sovereign, when none would, because none durst second him. His Speech deserves to be read by all gallant Men, though for want of Seconds in the House it was of *no use to him*, or his old Master. But, Sir, you are such a Man of Honour, as to undervalue the bravery of an Heroick Action for want of Success; and such a Casuist too, as to determine Cases of Conscience by telling of Noses; or else how came you to say, *That how many Partners soever the Bishops had in refusing the Declaration, in refusing the Oaths they must bear the blame alone, no body pretending to share with them in that, so that they must stand or fall by themselves*. But, pray Sir, how many in the whole Roman Empire bore the flame with *Athanasius*, under the *Arrian* Reigns, for withstanding the *Arrian* Confession. I believe Ten will go a great way in the number of the Bishops, who then preferred their Faith before their Possessions; and yet, Sir, our *English Athanasius* hath Five Bishops, and had had Seven to bear the blame with him of refusing the Oaths, had those Two been now alive, whom in the last Page of your Reply, you confess to be eminent and good Men. Was *St. Pauls* Case ever the worse, because all Men forsook him at his first hearing at *Rome*? Pray,

Sir, consider what a trifling Argument it would be against the Bishops, if it were true, that they had no Partners with them in their Cause. But it is a most Impudent untruth; for several Lords, and other Gentlemen have refused the Oath, not to mention Inferior Clergy-men, and *Fellows*, and *Scholars* of Colleges, who are below none of their Brethren, and Colleagues in true Merit. And though, Sir, you have no concern for them, yet many good Men have, and would before now have interceded for them, had they not been hinder'd by the Avarice and Ambition of some, who, it may be, as the Letter suggests, *have already cast Lots for their Garments*.

I am sorry there is occasion given to think, that some Persons, who ought to be free from this odious Imputation, lie under the suspicion of it; and the best way to clear themselves, will be now to shew their zeal and forwardness, in endeavouring to prevent the fall of their Brethren, unless the whole design of your Paper be to let the World know, that their Ruin is resolved upon; and that they may not fall lamented and pitied, to render them odious before hand.

You have indeed formerly made many splendid, but empty Inveictive Declarations against Persecution, without distinguishing of the Causes suffering; But now, Sir, forgetting what you have written upon this as well as upon other Subjects, you can persecute great and good Men with delight, and depress the Merits of their former Sufferings, even to nauseousness, telling us plainly again, that you cannot brook their Commendation in the superlative Degree, *only* (as you add) *for not taking the Oaths*. But, Sir, this is another of your malicious Insinuations; for the Letter doth not make Encomiums on them for that, but for what they did and suffer'd for the Nation, in that which you call *the great and glorious Scene*; and though his Encomiums are now and then in the Superlative, yet he makes no Comparisons, as you suggest; nor doth a Superlative in its nature imply Comparisons any more than the Positive Degree. If one, Sir, should say, you are a *most*, or a *very* learned man, it doth not follow but Twenty more may be as Learned as you. But it is no wonder, that the Praises of the good Bishops in the Superlative should go gall you; for there are some Spirits as thirsty of Praise as Misers are of Money, they cannot bear Rivals in Fame or Greatness, but would engross, if it were possible, the fame of the whole World; and think all the Honour that is given to others, especially in the Superlative Degree, is so much taken from themselves.

I will now, Sir, accompany you to the Declaration signed *December 11th. 1688.* and as you were so kind to the Bishops as to make them Judges in their own Causes; so I will return your civility upon you in making you Judge in yours: and in order to that, I shall ask you a Question or two, before I answer those which you put to them. Was the Signing of the Declaration in that time of Con-

faffion, a Deviation from their Duty, or not? If it were not, then they committed no fault in doing of it, but are still unblemished. If it were, then indeed they are culpable. But doth it follow, that becaufe they did one ill indeliberate action upon surprize, and in great confternation then, that they muft do a deliberate one, ten times worfe, now?

I can affure you, Sir, thofe good, and learned Men are no fuch loofe Cafuifts: it is not with them, *over Shoes, over Boots*; that is no Rule of Practice for them, whatfoever it may be for fuch as you; nor do they underftand the Modern way of correcting one error by another, and committing a fecond fault to juftifie a former, and a third to juftifie them both.

I fhall now, Sir, truly and fairly ftate that action: and I am very confident no equitable Perfon will think it needs any further Apology.

At that time the King was withdrawn; all his Army (which had not deferted) difbanded; the Rabble got loofe from the Reins of Government; the common Safety endanger'd. Now under thefe Circumftances, was it a Deviation from their Duty to apply themfelves to the P. of O. who had, by his Declaration, fet forth, *That he had no other Design in his Undertaking, than to procure a Settlement of the Religion, and of the Liberties and Properties of the Subjects, &c.* And that he would refer all to a free Affembly of the Nation in a Lawful Parliament. And at that time the Prince being at the head of a Potent Army, had the fole Power, and a fair opportunity of preferving the Publick Peace by taking the Government out of the hands of the riotous Mob, whofe furious Infolency, and growing Tumults threatned the like defolation to London and other parts of this Nation, that *Maftianello* formerly brought upon Naples.

And being under this inevitable neceffity of making Application to the P. of O. Thofe good Bifhops intirely trufting in his Highneffes good Intentions, did Sign that Declaration; the fum of which is, *That they would affift him in obtaining fuch a Parliament, wherein our Laws and Liberties may be Secured, the Proteftant Intereft Supported, to the glory of God, and the happinefs of the eftablifhed Government of thefe Kingdoms.*

Now, pray Sir, why fhould thofe Bifhops, having under thofe Circumftances Sign'd that Declaration, be unwilling to be judged for fo doing, either by the Declaration it felf, or by any Perfons whatfoever? But certainly there are fome in the World, who had need be cautious of paffing Sentence on the Declarations of other Men. Every reviling cenfure flies in their faces, who have manifefly and notoriously Deviated from their own Solemn Declarations and Subfcriptions made deliberately in calm and fedate times.

And to answer the Queries you put to the Bifhops, I Reply, That I cannot conceive, that by any rules in Logic it can be inferr'd, that becaufe they declared to affift the P. of O. in obtaining a Free Parlia-

ment, wherein the then *Laws, &c.* might be fecured, and the then *Eftablifhed Government* fupported, they therefore judged that K. J. had *Deserted and Abdicated* his Kingdom.

It is true he had withdrawn his Perfon: but doth every withdrawing of a King amount to a *Defertion* and *Abdication*? Several of the *Kings of England* have withdrawn themfelves, and yet have not been thought to have *Abdicated*; as *Edward the firft* did, King *Charles the firft*, when he efaped out of *Hampton-Court*, King *Charles the fecond*, when he left the Kingdom after *Worcefter Fight*.

And I muft tell you, Sir, that feveral Perfons were of Opinion, that K. J's Subjects in the *General-Defertion* rather deferted him, than that the King deferted his Subjects.

And fome judicious Men, who have read your Letter, are inclined to believe, that you have very much juftified K. J's withdrawing himfelf, by the hints you give in what imminent danger his Perfon was; when you tell us of the *Sword of Gideon*, which was old *Knox* his Phrafe, and now is yours for the *Sword of War*, the Regicides for the *Sword of Juftice*, and the *Jefuits*, as *Hofpinian* tells us, for the *Sword of Affaffination*: and I think it is all one both in Law, and Confcience, which of the three Subjects unhearth againft their lawful King: and if K. J. remembering the fate of his Anceftors, * *play'd at Bo-peep with the Government* (as you moft fcurriloufly call it) it was no more than what had been done by fome of them; and it had been well for others of them, if they could have done fo too.

You tell the Bifhops in an Ironie, full of your wanted Veneration, that they have too much Gravity as well as Underftanding, to aft their part in fuch Boys-play. But can fuch an excellent Hiftorian as you forget, how often the whole Nation has acted their part in it, and God only knows how often they may aft in it again. Methinks you, and fome other * Authors * might have more Gravity and Underftanding, than to iftvent fuch Doctrines, and Principles, as tend to no real thing but Bo-peep and Boys play in the Government: neff but this is an Age, in which wonders are common, New and therefore I do not admire to fee wife Men, now railing advance Principles, and urge Arguments in their own Vindication, which they formerly confuted and condemn'd.

You alfo upbraid the Bifhops with flying from their Subfcriptions. But, Sir, in return to your *Manna and your Men in the Parable*, let me ask you two Questions: Are you fure that this Free Parliament in which the Nation is fo happy, is that Lawful Free Parliament, which they intended in the Declaration? or are you fure they invited any man before, or courted any Man to reign over them, fince the departure of K. J? Methinks for the fake of your dear Friends Effential Nullity, you of all Men fhould not have objected the former unto them; as to the latter, tho' you cannot

cannot prove it, yet it shall go upon the account of your Zeal for the Publick, which tempts you so often to make bold with truth.

In the next place I proceed to discourse with you about the Doctrine of *Non-resistance*, as you have taken occasion to state the Controversie from some kind wifhes in the Letter, which the *Bishops Advocate*, as you call the Author, doth not assert, but officiously propose. And first of all I observe from your way of managing the Dispute, that you think the taking of the new Oath, and the Doctrine of *Non-resistance* are not fairly reconcilable: or else surely you would not be guilty of such a foolish Undertaking, as to attempt the confutation of that Doctrine, to induce the *Bishops* to take the Oath. I have made this observation the rather, because some of your Brethren have written Books to perswade the World there is no inconsistency between them; and seem loth to give up that venerable Doctrine, which a Country-man of yours hath acknowledged to be a thousand years older than that of Resistance. But before I come to consider your Arguments, I must freely acknowledge to you, that I am very much pre-judg'd against them upon the score of the Primitive Christians, I mean the *Good old Christians* of the Empire, who knew all those Maxims and Distinctions from whence you argue, as well as you do now, and yet never made use of any one of them in the most grievous Persecutions to justify Refusing of the Sovereign Authority.

They knew that *salus Populi, the Peoples safety*, &c. was a Maxim of their own Government; and that Government was not instituted for aggrandizing one single Person or Family, but for the Safety of the Publick; and that *Kings are for the People, and not the People for Kings*. They knew as well as you that History of the *Maccabees*, and the Obligation of the fourth Commandment, and the Distinction betwixt the Letter and Moral Equity and Design of a Law; and yet, as an Author, which you have read, observes, they never rais'd one Tumult in the longest and hottest Persecution; particularly in that most bloody and barbarous one of *Galerius Maximian*, when he ceasing to govern as a Roman Emperour, endeavour'd to make the Senate and People perfect slaves, and utterly deprive them of all Liberty and Property by introducing the *Persian Government*. In this attempt to subvert the Fundamentall Constitution of the Empire from Civil to Slavish, the Christians suffer'd not only as Christians upon the account of Religion, but in common with their fellow Subjects: and you are (I suppose) so well acquainted with the little Book of *Lactantius*, that describes that Scene of Tyranny, that I need not transcribe his Description of it, but only ask in your own Phrase, and upon your own Principles, was it reasonable they should then perish, because they did not resist? Dare you say, they chose their own destruction,

and betray'd themselves and their Religion, or that they made themselves as wise Martyrs for the Fifth Commandment, as the Jews did for the Fourth before the Decree of *Matrathias*? Where was your sword of *Gideon* then; and why did they not turn *active Maccabees*, that God might have blest them with miraculous victories? Or was it, that they were ignorant of your Maxims and Distinctions; which, if they could justify Subjects taking up Arms against their Sovereign, would have justified it then as well as now? Wherefore I conclude from the Practice of the Primitive Christians, that there is some defect or error in your way of reasoning upon this subject; and accordingly I find it all overthrown in five Pages of the History of *Passive Obedience* (which you are concern'd in honour to answer) excepting your Argument for Dispensing with the Fifth, as well as the Fourth Commandment, upon that distinction of the Letter from the moral Equity and Design of the Law. It is certainly much for your Interest, and the Peace of your Conscience (if it be not yet scared) that the Parallel betwixt these two Cases and Commandments should be exactly true. But to deal plainly with you, I can scarce believe you think so yourself, for the following reasons.

I. Because, as to the Power of Dispensing, there is a mighty Difference between a *Positive*, and a *Natural Law*; but you confound them together in your discourse, for after that you had proved, that the *Positive Precepts* of the Decalogue have been, and may be Dispensed with, of which you give some Instances in the Sabbath; then you conclude that the Fifth Commandment, which is a *Natural Precept*, may in like manner be dispens'd with too. But this is a mighty Inconsequence; because the Matter of a *Positive Precept* is in it self Indifferent, and becomes a duty merely because 'tis commanded: but in a *Natural Precept* the matter is necessary, and is therefore commanded because it was an antecedent Duty; and therefore, as you observe, the saving of the life of an *Ox* or an *Ass* was prefer'd before the Observation of the Sabbath, but I hope you will not say that we make as bold with the Fifth Commandment as save an *Ox* or an *Ass*. This very Instance may convince you, that there is a great difference between these two Precepts; and therefore though our Lord blamed the Jews for adhering so strictly to the Letter or Ritualty of the former, yet he blamed them more for eluding the rigour of the latter by the Vow or Oath *Corban*. And the reason is evident; for in the Fifth Commandment, as in all other *Natural Precepts*, the Morality or Design of the Commandment lies in the literal sense; but the Morality or Design of the Fourth, as in all other pure positive Institutions, often happens to be contrary to the Letter of it; and then, as you observe, we must stick to the design of the Law against the Letter of it. But this Distinction

on hath no place in Natural Precepts, and particularly in the Fifth Commandment, where the duty results from the relation, and cannot be separated from it, but must hold as long as that doth. I say the duty of the Fifth Commandment results from the relation, which Children and Subjects have to the Natural and Politick Father, which is the Rightful Sovereign of every Government: and as long as he remains Rightful Sovereign, so long Non-resistance or Submission is due unto him upon the score of Sovereignty, from which it cannot be precinded so much as in thought.

I confess in some Governments the Foundation of the relation is Temporary and Conditional, and then the relation upon the expiring of that time, or the breach of those Conditions, is separated from the Person; but in perpetual unconditional Governments (such as I take ours to be) the relation cannot be separated from the Person as long as he lives, unless he really Abdicates the Government; and by consequence the duties of subjection, resulting from that relation, must be his perpetual indispensable Right; and, among the rest, the duty of Submission and Non-resistance, which in the Scripture we find pressed upon the Christians in the Reigns of Princes, who, to use the New Distinction, were under the greatest *Moral Incapacity*, ruling as if the People were made for Kings, without any, or very little regard to the Publick Safety, which was then, as well as now, the end of Government, and the rule by which Princes ought to Govern.

In like manner, as I shew'd before, the Primitive Christians, who undoubtedly understood the duties of Princes, were subject to the most barbarous Tyrants, and in the most bloody Persecutions, and yet never presum'd to Dispense with the Fifth, as *Mattathias* did with the Fourth Commandment; which, I doubt not but they would have Dispensed with to save the life of a Dog or Cat.

I think, Sir, I have said enough to shew what a Casuist you are, if I should say no more; but to shew a farther disparity betwixt these two Cases I desire to ask you a Question or two.

1. Do you think those *Jews* would have presum'd to have dispensed with the Fourth Commandment, if there had been another additional Law to make it High Treason, and the Transgression of it present Execution of the Person that was the Transgressor, and loss of all the privileges of the Covenant to his Posterity; and moreover that your distinction between the Moral Equity and Literal Sense, upon which some in former times had presum'd to transgress it, had been declared Traiterous and Damnable, as the Distinction of the *Spencers* was; and that after this again, upon a pretence of dispensing with it for the publick safety not many Years before, it had been declared, that it was not lawful to recede from the Literal Sense upon any pretence whatsoever,

that neither the *Sanhedrim*, nor the People, nor both together had any right to dispense with it, or ought to pretend to the same, though the contrary had been practiced. I say, upon supposition of all this, would *Mattathias* and the *Jews* have dispensed with the Fourth Commandment?

2. I desire to know if they would have dispensed with it, upon supposition, that receding from the Literal Sense would have been more pernicious to them and their Country, than keeping strict to the Letter of it? Let us suppose, that by doing so they had entail'd a long intestine War upon the Nation, which would have cost it Twenty such Armies, and miserably watted their Country, and thereby made the Pity or Scorn of all other Nations. I say, upon supposition all the Calamities would have attended them that usually follow upon resisting the Supreme Authority, and setting up one Sovereign in a Government against another, whether you think they would then have dispensed with the literal Observation of the Sabbath Day? Common Prudence directs all Men of two Evils to choose the less, and to forbear the *Remedy*, as our Church speaks on this Subject, when it is worse than the Disease.

Sir, When I reflect upon these plain Differences between these two Cases; I cannot help thinking, that you want either Skill or Probity, or it may be something of both to make you a good Casuist: But be it one or the other or both, I pray God deliver his Law from such Expositors, his Church from such Pastors, and all good Children and Subjects from such Spiritual Guides. However it seems you have a great Opinion of your self, and as mean a one of the *Bishops*, if you think they can be persuaded to take the Oaths by your *weak Arguments*, as you truly call them in one Period, tho your modesty presently forgetting that humble Figure, in the next Period to it you call one of them a *Downright Demonstration*. The Argument is this, *Either it is lawful to obey K. W. or it is not? If it is lawful, then why may not any one swear he will do so?* Now Sir, to this Argument the Understanding of any ordinary Curate will return this Answer. In some things it is lawful to obey K. W. and in some things it is not; and one of those things in which I think it not lawful to obey him, is taking the Oath. Otherwise thus; In some Cases and Circumstances I think it lawful to obey K. W. and in others I do not: now so far as I can obey him, so far I will swear to obey him; but if I should take the Oath, I think I should swear to obey him further than I ought; and therefore that I may not swear falsely to him, which would be Perjury in the Act, nor break my former Oath, which I think would be Perjury in the Object, I will not swear at all.

So much in reply, Sir, to your *Downright Demonstration*, which you stole out of the *Pastoral Letter*; and what right you have to sical other Folks

Folks Arguments, and not cite them for it, you can Best tell.

After your Arguments to the Bishops to induce them to take the Oath; you say, that if they *really* flumble at it, then it is reasonable for them to give as good security to the Government, as if they had taken it.

I know not, Sir, what *Security* you mean: but certainly the approved peaceable Temper, and quiet Disposition of those pious good Bishops, and several other truly Conscientious Persons, who had rather part with their Livelihoods than violate their Consciences by taking the Oaths now imposed, is a far better *Security* to the Government than the Oaths of either inconsiderate, or rash turbulent Spirits, or self-interested Persons, who to promote or secure their Secular Interest, will (as some of them formerly have taken both the *Covenant and Engagement*) swallow any Oaths, though never so apparently contradictory to their formerly Avowed Principles, Solemn Declarations and Subscriptions; or than the Oaths of some prettily Scrupulous, and Tender-conscienced Men, who by their *Evasive Declarations* and nice Distinctions endeavour to make void the obligation of the late Oaths.

You cannot but have heard, how insignificant many Men have made the Oath with their *Declarations*; and how many Books, which are written for the taking of it, have by their Expositions made it almost of no use to the Government. A late Book written upon this Subject, is published to persuade us, that the Oath only obliges those that take it, to serve their Majesties in Matters that are for the *Publick Good*, but not injuriously to K. J. and that the Fealty and Allegiance sworn to them, is not inconsistent with that which is sworn to him; and he wishes that the Parliament would in a Judicial manner so explain it, and for the publick Good I wish so too.

Thus much by way of Apology for the Non Swearers, in answer to your candid Suggestions; after which having wiped your Mouth, you call them again *Excellent Persons*, And wish they might continue in their Stations which they so well become: But this is no sooner out, but in the next Paragraph you foam again; for there they are guilty of *Faction and Schism in the Nation*, and have been the occasion of the expence of so much *Treasure and blood*. Now, Sir, as to *Faction and Schism* in a Nation, it is just as it is in the Church: those who are not the Causes of it, cannot be guilty of it; and whether the Bishops and others that refuse the Oath are a *Faction and Schismatical* part of the Nation, I refer you to the late Collection out of Judge Hales his *Pomponius Atticus* in reference to *Factions that arise in a State or Kingdom*. I refer you to this Paper, because all the World knows you have a particular Veneration for that Judges Memory; who indeed was a most Judicious Lawyer, a good Parrior, and a very honest Man.

And then as to their being the Occasion of so much Bloodshed in Ireland, you might with as much reason have imputed it to their refusing the Declaration, and their being sent to the Tower: But, it seems, as some Men treated Charles the First of Blessed Memory, so you treat the Bishops: they were in Profession his most Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, but that they might make the People to hate him, they imputed all the Bloodshed in Ireland to his Majesty; and just to the Bishops are Reverend Persons, for whom you have as great and true a Veneration, as any can pretend to, but you lay the Blood shed in Ireland at their Doors to make the People hate them. But, God be thanked, it is somewhat too late to raise the Rabble upon them; and all the World knows the not reducing of Ireland without Bloodshed is owing to other Causes; nevertheless, Sir, the Bishops are beholding to you for making them the occasion of it; and when God shall make Inquisition for that Blood, it will be happy for you, if you be found as innocent and free from the guilt of it, as they are. I know they have Charity enough to forgive you, though you know what you do: But, Sir, God will not forgive you, unless you can bring your self to such a Temper, as to ask their Pardon, and make them amends for the Injuries you have done unto them; for in the same Period, by the help of your old Servant But, you also impute the refusing of the Oath to *humour*, and represent their deprivation as their own Choice: And indeed it was their own Choice, as their going to the Tower was, and they also deprive themselves, as you express it; and so their old Friends the R. C's said they sent themselves to the Tower. Unfortunate Men! that are still so bent upon their own Ruin; and why, said another of their back Friends, should we pity Men that will not pity themselves?

Then with all the Civility in the World you go about to tell them, that the People (forsooth) will not be so sensible of their worth, as to be concerned for their Sufferings, and that they are mistaken in the computation in the number of their Friends, as K. J. was of his by the Addressee to him. But, Sir, how absurd and incongruous is your Comparison: for when K. J. received the Addressee, he was in the height of his Majesty as King; but these Bishops ever since the Revolution have been in their Declension, and since the first of August looked upon as Men who are not of this World; and if any, either Clergy-men or Lay-men, have since express their Duty and concern for them, they have no reason to suspect their Sincerity, but on the contrary to believe, that they are their Friends in reality as well as pretence. No, Sir, they are the Men of Greatness, and the Favourites of Princes, who have most reason to fear that they are out in their *Computation*; and if it were not to gratifie some Mens Vanity by the Comparison, I would beg leave to mind them of Cardinal Woolsey; for if ever they fall but half as low as he did, they

will find themselves as much out in their Account, as you impudently say the Bishops were in the number of the Clergy who would not take the Oaths, and have their new Retinue reduc'd, as you tell us the Church of the Donatists was, to one single Person; and then their Clients and Flatterers, who worshipt before, will stand afar off, and say like those of *Sejanus*,

*Nunquam, si quid mihi credis, amavi
Hunc hominem.*

In the conclusion of your Letter you tell us, you do not think there is such a great scarcity of worthy Men in the Church, but that it may be possible to find out four or five as good, who may be able to supply the Bishops places, and come up to their pitch. Now, Sir, that there is no scarcity of good men in the Church is very true, neither would there have been any, tho you had not come among them: but that any learned Men of true Moral Worth and Goodness can accept the Bishopricks to be vacated by the Deprivation of those excellent Persons, is a Paradox to my belief. Howbeit I doubt not but they will be supplied by Men worthy, if not by worthy Men: And as to those Two Persons, who have succeeded in the Two last Vacancies, I dare be bold to say, that it would have blasted all the Reputation they have acquired, if they had succeeded, (as some I hear are ready to do) in the suspended Bishops Sees; for Understanding and Good Men would have looked upon them no better, than the Faithful *Alexandrians* did upon *Gregory* and *George*, who successively filled the Chair of *Antioch* when he was deprived. All the Authority of the Emperor and Synod of *Antioch* could not reconcile them to such Successors; which *Eusebius Emisenus* foreseeing, prudently declined the Bishoprick when it was

offer'd to him. I wish some Venerable Men, whose Reputations are yet recoverable, would consider what reason there is to follow his Example: but if they shall think fit to take their Chairs, and any good People shall think it their Duty nevertheless to adhere to their old Bishops and Metropolitan, then it shall be disputed upon true Catholick Principles, on which side the Shift lies.

I have now, Sir, run thro' your Letter; and least I should have omitted any thing in it, which I should have answer'd; or not perfectly answer'd any thing in it, which I did not omit to supply either, or both of those Defects, I refer you to the following passages which I desire you to consult, viz. *Hist. Reform. tom. 2. p. 243. Resp. on Varill. hist. 2. & 4. tom. p. 126. Defence of Resp. on Varill. p. 72. Marginal Note on Bishop Bedell's Letter to Wadsworth. p. 444. of his Life, or rather Hist. of Passive Obed. p. 76. Letter to Mr. Thevenot, p. 32. Collect. of 18. Papers, p. 86. Vindication of the Authority, &c. in four Conferences, in every page. Hist. Reform. tom. 1. p. 1. 107*

Sir, I would have set them down in Words at length, but that I was afraid to trespass too much upon your Patience; and if I have done so, I beg your Pardon for it, and protest to you by all that Partiality and particular Affection which you have for the Bishop to a failing, and by all the Veneration you have for those excellent Persons, that I am

Your most Affectionate Friend,

and Humble Servant

A. Z.



